

News-Sun

JAL EUNICE HOBBS LOVINGTON TATUM SEMINOLE DENVER CITY

Carlsbad's mayor says the land near WIPP is perfect to store highly radioactive nuclear waste

'The next Yucca Mountain'



This Feb. 27 photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office shows the arrival of remote-handled transuranic waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad. AP PHOTO

'The community's ready, the timing couldn't be better'

ALBUQUERQUE (AP) — Longtime Carlsbad Mayor Bob Forrest recalls the days when no one wanted to take the federal government's radioactive waste except his southern New Mexico community.

Ten years after it opened, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, commonly known as WIPP, remains the government's only radioactive waste dump.

But now, Forrest says, the climate for all things nuclear has changed, and communities across the nation are fighting for projects.

Forrest himself believes the vast, 250 million-year-old salt beds that house WIPP east of his community of about 25,000 could store high-level nuclear waste such as that once destined for the Yucca Mountain project the Obama administration is apparently abandoning.

Such a repository would be separate from WIPP, he said.

WIPP, excavated 2,150 feet below the surface of the desert, is designed for so-called transuranic waste generated by the nation's defense work — such

SEE YUCCA, Page 3



An historic marker is seen as the cooling towers of Three Mile Island's Unit 1 Nuclear Power Plant pour steam into the sky in Middletown, Pa.

Global warming giving nuclear power new support

MIDDLETOWN, Pa. (AP) — The nation's worst nuclear power plant accident was unfolding on Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island when an industry economist took the rostrum at a nearby business luncheon.

It did not go well.

Those in the standing-room-only crowd listened to economist Doug Biden's thoughts about cheap, reliable nuclear power, but Biden could not calm their nerves or answer their pointed questions: Should they join the tens of thousands of people fleeing south-central Pennsylvania? Should they let their children drink local milk?

Three decades later, fears of an atomic

SEE NUCLEAR, Page 3

We Have A Solution for the Nuclear Power Waste

3 Nuclear Myths:

1. The U.S. doesn't have a suitable place for disposing of waste from reprocessing spent nuclear fuel.
2. No community in the U.S. supports disposing commercial nuclear waste in locations nearby.
3. Therefore, nuclear power is not a viable way for our country to address our pressing energy needs.

Reality:

- For almost 10 years, the U.S. has been safely disposing intermediate level nuclear waste in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) repository located 1/2 mile underground near Carlsbad, NM.
- This waste is safe from floods, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, and terrorist attacks. The salt is encapsulating the waste and will isolate it from the biosphere forever.
- The vast majority of Carlsbad citizens support not only current nuclear waste disposal at WIPP, but also the concept of disposing of waste from reprocessing commercial spent fuel.



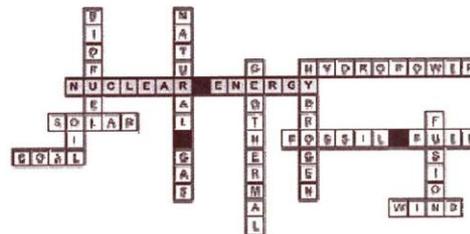
More than 300,000 drum equivalents of intermediate-level nuclear waste from defense activity have been safely emplaced in the WIPP underground repository

The Carlsbad Solution:

- As demonstrated by WIPP, the ancient salt formation near Carlsbad, New Mexico is an ideal location for safely disposing of waste from reprocessing commercial spent fuel



Ask about our 1,000,000-year warranty

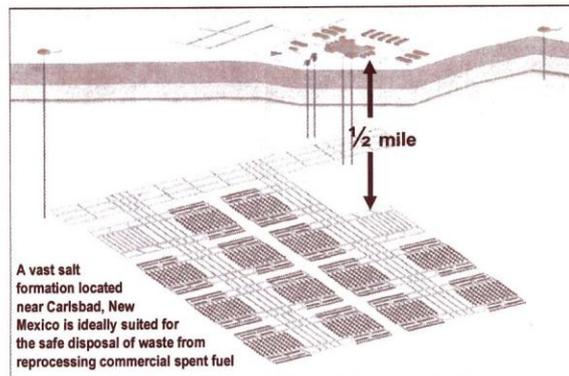


A suitable disposal site for radioactive waste from reprocessing makes nuclear energy a viable alternative for meeting our nation's pressing energy needs



Carlsbad's nearby salt beds formed in an era before dinosaurs, and stretch for 100's of miles. The same natural geologic barriers that preserved the salt intact for more than 250 million years, safely isolate the waste from the environment just as well.

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A vast salt formation located near Carlsbad, New Mexico is ideally suited for the safe disposal of waste from reprocessing commercial spent fuel

Albuquerque Journal Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Carlsbad Takes Aim at Yucca Mountain Job

After two decades of planning for a repository for spent nuclear fuel, Yucca Mountain, the designated site, was abruptly removed from the picture by President Obama's new administration. There are several ways of looking at this development. The physical science tilted against the site once deemed the most appropriate for waste from nuclear power plants. The political science — a Democratic administration reinforcing Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada — tilted against a site in Reid's state. Or Obama is tilted against nuclear power and intent on tying another 20-year knot in the waste stream.

Into the breach steps Bob Forrest, mayor of a town that embraces nuclear waste. Carlsbad is home to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, the only federal repository for radioactive waste. Forrest said he plans to go after Yucca's former mission. Make no mistake, it is a different job than WIPP's, which entails burying transuranic waste from weapons programs in deep, geologically stable salt beds. Fuel rods from power plants have a much higher level of radioactivity and generate far more heat than the typical drum of plutonium-contaminated junk eligible for disposal at WIPP. But the area has salt beyond the WIPP site. In fact, the beds extend clear to Kansas, so other communities could follow Carlsbad's lead and compete for the site.

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As WIPP proves safe, should role expand?

By | The New Mexican

4/4/2009

As officials at the Waste Isolation Pilot Project in Southern New Mexico celebrate 10 years of operation, much is being made of its safety record in disposing of low-level nuclear refuse — things like laboratory clothing and gloves, and gravel scraped from where barrels of that waste were stored.

And the record has been a good one, give or take a dozen or so non-threatening delivery-truck mishaps and a couple of misdirected deliveries; more than 7,000 loads have been carried there — from Los Alamos National Laboratory, from the now-closed Rocky Flats weapons plant and from nuclear installations coast to coast.

The painstakingly careful work of WIPP goes on, while the mayor of Carlsbad, 26 miles to the west, wants to make more of the project: With Nevada trying to stop the Yucca Mountain repository for high-level waste 90 miles from Las Vegas, Carlsbad's Mayor Bob Forrest is wondering aloud: Why not hand the Yucca Mountain mission to WIPP?

Those are fighting words for many New Mexicans, especially those in our neck of the woods; activists here fought WIPP tooth and nail. Their efforts gained Congress' promise that the project would store only lightly radiated waste.

That's great, except that the really hot stuff — spent fuel rods from nuclear power plants, and more highly radioactive byproducts of the nuclear-weapons manufacturing process — is sitting around in temporary storage; a barely contained menace.

WIPP, dug from the vast and deep-underground salt beds sprawling from New Mexico to Kansas, is a relatively stable place where far more dangerous stuff than contaminated lab gloves could go: Earthquakes are almost unknown, and very little water flows through the salt. Above ground, it's pretty flat country; tough for terrorists to go undetected.

So we, too, wonder: Could a nearby addition to WIPP hold material too radioactive to safely recycle, while Yucca Mountain becomes the site for potentially reusable mid-level waste — retrievable when the United States recovers from its terrorist paranoia and comes up with a security system allowing us to recycle and reuse them? In Europe, they're already doing it — and it makes more sense than stripping away northwestern New Mexico and southeastern Utah for more uranium.

The scientists of LANL and our other national laboratories someday might find ways not only to neutralize the most dangerous nuclear material, but also to reuse both the power-plant fuel rods and our stockpiled hydrogen bombs as safety-improved energy supplies.

Until then, there's got to be safer, more secure storage for such dangerous stuff — the potentially recyclable highest-level waste stored at Yucca Mountain, the non-recyclable material, high- and low-level, disposed of at WIPP. WIPP already has many of the facilities needed for handling and disposing of higher-level waste.

This would involve a long political process. Challenges raised by likely opponents, many of them valid, would have to be met. And maybe by then, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, the Nevadan leading the Yucca Mountain opposition, will be out of power.

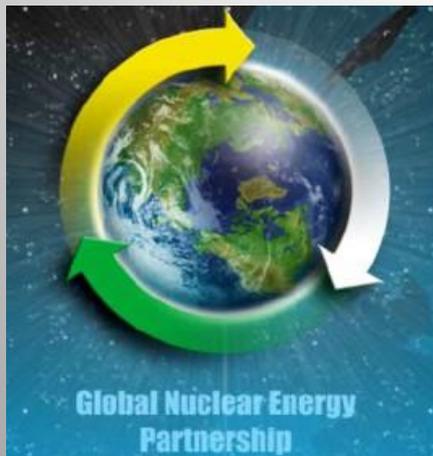
In the meantime, Energy Secretary Steven Chu is putting together a blue-ribbon panel to look into such things as recycling possibilities, while the department develops a long-term energy strategy that could include nuclear power. Whether WIPP would be part of that strategy, storing other kinds of waste, scientists there don't want to speculate.

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Carlsbad has changed NIMBY

- WIPP -1
- LES – 2
- GNEP – 18-70M
- AREVA - 200



5 Points for Nuclear Power

- Middle East Crisis
- Oil Reached \$70 a Barrel
- Global Warming
- One of the Wheels at Yucca Mountain Needs to Come Off
- Fire on an Oil Rig in Gulf of Mexico